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KATSKILL
AND OTHER
POEMS

A decorative graphic of an arrow pointing downwards, with a fletched tail and a small floral ornament at the tip.

BY THE LATE
S. WEIR ROOSEVELT

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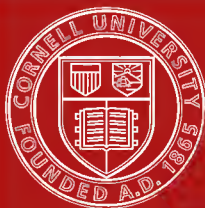
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RATSKILL

AND

OTHER POEMS,

By the Late
S. WEIR ROOSEVELT.

NEW YORK: CHARLES F. ROPER

1870.

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TO THE
REV. DR. MUHLENBERG,
WHOM THE AUTHOR LOVED AND TRUSTED
AND TO WHOSE LIFE OF FAITH,
MANIFESTED BY COUNTLESS WORKS OF LOVE,
HE ALWAYS POINTED, AS HIS IDEAL, OF THE TRUE
Following of Christ,
THIS SELECTION FROM HIS VERSES, NOW FIRST MADE,
IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

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HE Author of the following poems died in March of the present year, at the age of forty-six. Some of them were written almost in boyhood; among these are the "Lines to a Human Skull" and "Kaatskill," which, though among his earliest productions, are marked by an originality of thought, and vigor of imagination, which can not fail to impress the reader. The "Lines to Frinket" (a pet name for his youngest boy) were enclosed in a letter, hurriedly written only a month before his decease, and give evidence of the brightness and elasticity of his spirit, under the severest and most protracted physical suffering. The present collection comprises only a portion of his poems.

Mr. ROOSEVELT was educated for the Bar, and, for many years practised with great success, winning the highest reputation for integrity and soundness of judgment. He was no ordinary man: a graduate of Columbia College, possessed of fine talents, a severe student and well grounded in the principles of the law, he never sought the applause of the multitude through sensational litigation, preferring such juridical arenas, as required extensive research and studious investigation.

From the moment, however, that he was elected by the people, a Commissioner of the Public Schools, and a Member of the Board of Education of the City of New York, his law books were thrown aside, his law business was neglected, his spirit seemed to find a new and more genial atmosphere, and soul and body he devoted, for years, to the cause of popular education, for which he deserved and received the thanks and gratitude of the community.

Long after he was attacked by the tedious illness which terminated his life, he continued his visitations to the Schools, and when he was compelled by physical inability to discontinue his visits, deep sorrow touched the hearts of both teacher and scholar ; and they who had been so long accustomed to listen to his teachings of wisdom, felt that there was indeed a void in their midst.

He was eminently happy in every relation of life, genial to all—antagonistic to none. His home was a most happy and congenial one, and wife, children and friends were sharers in all his studies and pursuits.

He was afflicted with a malady which, while it severely affected him physically, left his mental powers untouched, and these shone brightly to the last hours of his life. Racked with pain which gave him sleepless nights, no murmur ever passed his lips ; the force of his mind and his genial temper carrying him through the severe trial, with the fortitude of the Philosopher and the resignation of the Christian.

Although we all knew of his varied scientific and literary acquirements, there were but few of us who were aware that he had the soul of poetry within him.

These fugitive pieces, however, written from boyhood to his latter days, show an exquisite taste and sensibility, and the cultivation of every sentiment that is refined in our nature.

They are conspicuous for gentle sentiment, pleasant satire, and a lively wit. The following have been selected by his family for publication, in behalf of St. Johnland, a noble institution in which he was much interested. They will show his character and culture in a new and pleasing light, and I have much gratification, as an old friend and associate with him for many years in his public school duties, in prefacing the following selections with these few lines, as an act of regard and a tribute, to the memory of one of the most intelligent, cultivated and useful men I ever knew.

JAMES W. GERARD.

New York, *December*, 1870.

KAATSKILL.

E climbed the southern hill,
That lady fair and I,
To watch the wide world growing still,
And see the daylight die.
Up to a table broad of stone,
Girt by trees on either hand,
Under foot with pebbles strown,
And glittering small sand.
Save those mosses, gray and green,
On its very brink that grow,
There is nothing else between
Man and his world below.
And the proud eye with delight,
Travels from that fearful height,
Over field and forest top,
Over where the Highlands slope.
Down into the glancing tide
Of their mighty river,
On forever—and more wide,
Grows the scene forever.

The soul careering, seems to go
Through wider fields of being,
And the untiring eye has no
Satiety of seeing:

Vain-glorious were we, thus only
Checked by the horizons blue,
Vain-glorious were we, the lonely
Monarchs of that heaven bound view.

And now there falls a silent calm
On the reclining land ;
Around us breathing forth their balm,
The mountain fir-trees stand,
And rustle with a solemn sound,
By the soft night wind fanned.

We in a charmed ring are bound
By their sepulchral band.

And a strange awe when we listen
Heavily steals o'er us,—

But the sunlit Heavens glisten,
And a bright scene lies before us.

For the Hudson runs like molten gold
His purple hills between ;

And the hazy distance lies unrolled,
A fringe of silver sheen,
Till earth and the horizon blend

In the faint hue of even,
As if the curse were at an end,
And the world mixed with heaven.
Over us is a shining dome,
So radiantly bright,
It seems transparent, and the home
Of angels, opening to sight.
It has that supernatural glow
Of an interior light,
When creeping o'er the earth below,
Come shadows of the night.
Fantastic forms are in the sky,
Galleons, with silken sails
Swelling to the tropic gales,
Solemnly glide by
Through a red and rippling plain,
Before a storm of golden rain,
Those phantom vessels fly.
There long forests stretch away
Into the distance dim,
With snows of many a winter's day
Bowing down each limb,
While the setting sun wraps a shroud of glory
Round their trunks with old age hoary,
Their tufted heads and pillars wan

Hang on the empty blast,
Like the gardens of old Babylon,
Ere its ancient pride was past.
Ruined temples building
On a cloudy pinnacle ;
Domes of celestial gilding,
Circles of huge stones, where well
Druids of old time might dwell,
Undesigned and without roof,
Standing stone, from stone aloof ;
Minarets with thin sharp spires ;—
Nay, but the eye grows weary
Before the fancy tires,
And the scene is waxing dreary
The western sunlight fires
Wane, for the sun is going down ;
The lord of the day puts off his crown.
When hark, there rises up a sound,
Strangely sad and sweet,
On the evening air from the dusky ground,
Far, far below our feet.
It tells of the wood-robin's clear throat ;
He sings when the sun is in the west,
With that long melancholy note
He lulls himself to rest—

And a thousand of their voices swell
Up to us, and blend in one.
It seems an exquisite farewell
From the world of sound, to the setting sun.
I wished, oh lady, in that hour,
That we were gifted with the power
Of changing souls awhile—
The solemn grandeur of that scene,
With full glory enters in
Souls that like your own, have been
Never stained with guile.
I have said feebly what I felt,
And am proud of having knelt
Before the self-same shrine
Of nature in a mood divine ;
Though with a votary, whose vows
Were more acceptable than mine.

THE PAGAN QUESTIONING DEATH.

“The outward darkness and the inward light.”



MIST of night and blindness, that must
hang
Before the life to come !
O Tomb ! that closes once with iron clang,
And is for ever dumb !

Ships, which go forth upon the boundless main,
And perish far at sea,
Are tossed in fragments to the land again—
But naught returns from thee.

No whisper comes from all the generations,
Through thy dark portals thrust ;
No breath of life, among the buried nations,
One moment stirs their dust.

No souls beneath, e'er struggling into sight,

Heave up the silent ground ;
Though the green sod above them is so light—
So frail the crumbling mound.

I listen by the sea, to catch some tone
From spirits that are fled ;
There is no voice in its eternal moan,
No voice of all its dead.

The stars look coldly down when man is dying,
The moon still holds its way ;
Flowers breathe their perfume round us ; winds keep
sighing ;
Naught seems to pause or stay.

Yes ! blindly on—o'er all that thinks and feels,
The universe must roll ;
Though at each turn its adamant wheels
Crush out a human soul !

Toward yon bright vault of heaven I dare not raise
The cry of my despair,
Lest I should hear the echo which betrays
That all is empty there.

Yet has my Soul, within, the gift of seeing
Beyond this earth and sky ;
I *feel* the immortal instinct of my being—
I *know* it cannot die !

SERENADE.



WEET sound in all thine eloquence
Of sadness or delight,
Go, breathing music round thee, hence
Into the silent night.

Be wafted with the scent of flowers,
Upon the evening air,
Which whispers thro' the long still hours,
And lulls the sleep of care.

Fall gently on one slumbering ear—
Oh wake her not, but tell
The love of him, who watches here,
Which thou can'st speak so well.

The scent of flowers, the night wind's sigh,
The starlight's passing gleam,
And thine own pervading melody,
Be woven with her dream.

Her heart will know thee and rejoice,
Sweet messenger of mine,
Oh music ! can a better voice
Be found for love, than thine?

THE AUTUMN WIND.

HE wind that wails on an autumn night
While the rustling leaves grow sere,
With what a strange and sad delight
It swells upon the ear,
And moans to the heart of storm and cold,
Muttering o'er and o'er,
Till the very emptiness of night
Seems knocking at the door.
And then it gasps, and dies away
Like the voice of a spirit weeping ;
And whispers of the chill decay
O'er the face of nature creeping.
The lonely man with a thrill
Of feeling, half kin to mirth.
Draws near the fire, and half sadly broods
Over the silent hearth ;
Musing long with vacant eye,
While the autumn wind goes moaning by.
The friend turns kindly to his friend,
Glad not to be alone.

The lover clasps the little hand
That nestles in his own ;
Ah ! the soul of thought, the friendly heart,—
Will be darkened and grow still—
And the loving eye lose all its light,
And the warm young hand be chill.
Yet the sad voice of the dreary wind
Will be hushed in silence never—
As in the world's first autumn night,
It waileth on, forever.

WOMAN'S SMILE



H woman's smile, oh woman's smile,
Beelzebub the prince of guile,
Has many a mask and veil for sin ;
But alas ! poor Satan, while we begin
To wonder, and to doubt
If it can be himself, the disguise within,
It suddenly grows somewhere too thin,
And the cloven foot peeps out.
Oh what would he give, the prince of guile,
For a mask and a veil like woman's smile !
A radiance in the eyes
Like lights on some holy shrine—
Dimples that seem along her cheek
In rosy little waves to break
Stirred by some breath divine.
These—these all mingling, and beside,
An innocent look the while,
To which a man must needs confide—
And this is woman's smile.

It will shine on you calm and sweet, until
 You are dying by love affected,
It will shine more calmly and sweetly still,
 When you're dying with love rejected.
Go watch the moon survey
 Some shell fish out of place,
Tossed on the beach, by the waves in play,
 How the planet smiles in the victim's face—
And still with each benignant ray
 Draws gently all the tide away.
To man tossed here and thither
 So woman's smile is bland
And so he is left to wither
 Upon love's dreary strand

A VEXED QUESTION.

OME preachers say "the vanity
Of vanities is dress ;
To love it is profanity,
Or very little less."
Alas, Alas—for clergymen
It seems quite suicidal
To take all other people's gods
But keep themselves an idol.
To scare from worshipping a coat,
Poor men about the town,
Yet set their hearts and souls upon
The colors of a gown,—
To lay beneath the ghostly ban,
Attention to the fashions,
While for their own dear outer-man,
They rouse all human passions,—
To wage a war upon the clothes,
We laymen buy at home,
Yet for a simple surplice white

To go as far as Rome,—
If not a worshipping of mammon,
Is most emphatically gammon.
We worldlings never put a friend
In coventry alone,
Because his views of male attire
Are different from our own.
We never could on all the world,
Turn scornfully our back,
Because their creed is neckcloth white,
While we believe in black.
And in our ignorance we doubt
If dress, upon the whole,
Can ruin or convert a man,
Condemn or save a soul.
Why ye, who up to Heaven raise
This new and noisy Babel,
Have changed the plot but not the end
Of Esop's well-known fable,
(The fable of the oyster,
And the monkey judge I mean)
For while ye quarrel o'er the shells,
The fish slips out between.
And like Napoleon's column
Of weapons of the slain,

When this war of gowns is over,
Methinks there will remain,
A heap of surplices and bands
Where now a tottering church still stands.

THE FOUNTAIN.

N the cool depths, the silence
Of a woodland dim,
A fountain is ever dripping
Over its granite brim.
Standing lonely as a shrine
Weather stained and grey,
The wild-wood flowers, the water flowers,
Come pilgrims there alway,
To breathe the freshness so divine,
Which it sheds thro' the night and day,
And the grass at its brink, and the mosses shine,
With the hoar frost of its spray.

So it is ever dripping,
Through the heats of sparkling noon,
When dusk through the woods is creeping
Under the glancing moon,
Plashing, plunging o'er and o'er,
With a mellow-gurgle, a mystery
Of voices gushing—like the roar

Forever dying on the shore
Of some far distant sea.
Forever dying, seeming ever
Away from the ear to roll,
Still reviving and ceasing never
To echo in the soul.
Sit by that fountain, wayfarer,
Traveler old and gray,
And quench thy thirst in its waters
Thy fever in its spray.
Sit by that natural shrine,
And so in the atmosphere divine
Which it breathes around all day,
Though thou be n'eer so travel-worn,
Foot-sore, sorrowful, forlorn—
It will steal thy woes away.
And thou shalt for a little while
In the falling water's voice,
In the cool waves dimpled glance and smile
Happily so rejoice—
That memories, wilted long by time
Of childhood's glee,
Of youth's romance, its hopes sublime,
Manhood's high purpose, strong and free,
Will one by one come back to thee.

Thy life's most glad and sunny hours
Not faded—dim—

But fresh in their bloom as the water flowers,
That fringe the fountain's brim.

And sit ye by the fountain,
Who are old before your time ;
Worship nature in that image,
Of her peacefulness sublime.

And when the sound with its lapse and lull
Sinks in your soul, and when

Your heart of that pure voice is full—
Take back your youth again.

TO A HUMAN SKULL.

DELIVERED BEFORE THE PHILOLEXIAN SOCIETY IN 1840.

ELL might one ask it,
This glossy globe, polished by rain and
wind,
Has this once been the cradle of a mind?
Has a soul folded wing in such a casket;
Or a voice couched these ivory gates behind,
That gape like rusty and unhinged port cullis,
Yawning as dumbly as an open dungeon,
Whose captive, long, long time hath fled I wis?
Yes—here the soul hath lain in swaddling clothes,
Cloistered all nun-like in its hidden cell—
Wrapped up in many a warm integument.
This mouldering citadel,
Whose grim and dreary aspect makes one shudder,
Is but the ruin of a tenement,
Built gloriously and well;
There the ethereal eye swam in its socket,

And soft and tinted flesh mantled this vacancy ;
 Veiling these blanched walls with its tapestry.
Yes, in this hall, Cupid once held his court, —
 The breath of life full oft hath come and gone,
Passing this long dismantled sally-port.
 Nay, in this echoing cavern once was heard
The laugh, the sigh,
 And Love's low whispered word
Perchance hath once been coined in this unseemly
 die.

This thing bore once a name ;
 In its frail shell, have wrought,
Day after day, the great forge-fires of thought ;
 What matters it—can'st trace the spirit flame ?
Perhaps a pent-up genius, who can tell,
 He has dictated many an oracle,
Yet did it fail to write
 Some token on this bleached bone tablet white,
Then be it our desire,
 When the Promethean fire
Has flickered out, and our
 Poor cranium, (the empty sconce)
Is tost, all heedlessly as this about ;
 That like a battered censer

Which hath swung out its time, some Catholic shrine
before.

Its holy office o'er,

Its last dismissal given,

May our worn head-piece rest

From breathing through a life, Incense of praise,
toward Heaven.

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS.

HE shepherds watched together, and the night
Wore on, and gathered darkness, and grew
still ;
And they paced to and fro, and looked for
light.

The hosts of stars waned, and went out, until
Those men shrank from the shadows thickening folds,
And with low whispering, pressed side by side,
While the white-bearded elders of them, told
How they had seen the summer eventide
Come down on Judah from their early years ;
But never such a night, livelong and dark
And thirsty, for the dew withheld its tears,
Yet their piled watch-fire dwindled to a spark.

When suddenly a glory broke around ;
Broad light fell like a mantle on the field ;
The Heavens were lit—wave after wave of sound
Swept over them, a mighty anthem pealed—

An angel stood among them from the smile
Of God still radiant, "Earth, hear my voice !
I bring glad tidings to you, even while
I speak, the Prince of Peace is born. Rejoice !"
At the word,
The sky had angels given it for stars,
"Peace, peace on earth, good will to men," was heard,
The spirits' chorus and farewell—the bars
Of night fell back—shame on the slumbering world,
That angels first must thank the Holy One
For it—that night Christ's banner was unfurled,—
Death was disarmed, and our lost Eden won.

The princes of the world, its priests and sages,
Sat in deep darkness. One more great than they
Stood with them, prophet, priest and king ; long ages
Of seven-fold night rolled back, and it was day.

We watch in darkness, but a spirit pleads
With us ; a light breaks in on us, and then
We join the chorus which the Spirit leads,
Of "Peace on earth, peace and good will to men."

The book I give thee, Lady, by God's finger
Was written on men's hearts—the angel tongue

No more speaks to us ; here, the echoes linger
Of that first chorus which the angels sung ;
Here rests that light from Heaven, and the song
Now breathes from earth, which rang in Heaven
then ;
“Glory to Him, to whom our thanks belong,
“Peace to the world—peace and good will to men.”

ABOUT THE SEX.

E think of Woman with a kind of shame,—
We seem to understand her but in part,
And we may fetter, but we cannot tame,
The wild and wayward instincts of her
heart.

Wild in its friendship, whose capricious kindness
Is hard to earn, and easy to offend ;
Wild in its love, whose persevering blindness
Is a caprice we may not comprehend.

We worship in her, what, we cannot know ;
The innocence so quick to take alarm,
That seems to shrink and palpitate, as though
The shadow of impurity were harm.

She is so delicate, so weak and pliant,
Yet her soft hand, with its electric thrill,
Though laid upon the shoulder of a giant,
Would leave him only strength to do her will.

Her witchery has brought the wise and great
To open shame ; her glance has kindled war ;
And many a pilot at the helm of state
Has steered to ruin by that wandering star.

We must forever trust her—ever doubt her ;
And, while our being has so brief a span,
Must find existence, with her or without her,
A choice of lives too difficult for man.

PARTING WITH YOUTH.

I.



MISS the exulting glow

Which woke me once ; I miss

The dreams which kept me sleepless ; and I
know

The well-spring of my youth is spent and low.

No more the silver chord and golden bowl

Bring from its depths that freshness of the soul.

II.

The earth that was so green,

The glorious sky of old,

As year on year comes darkening between,

Are growing now a dull and faded scene ;

I view the present dimly, through a haze

Of sunny memories from by-gone days.

III.

The Summer wind, at night,
Whispered of gladness then ;
It stired my being with a vague delight ;
From days to come, anticipations bright
Floated upon its rustling wings to me,
Like the sweet breath from flowers I could not see.

IV.

Now I can only hear
The flap of idle leaves ;
The Summer wind is empty to my ear
I hope no more—the future is too near.
One moment of those hopes again were worth
All I have since found real on the earth.

V.

When night was in its noon
I watched the star-lit sky,
Dreaming the dream of Youth beneath the moon ;
I had no Past—I little knew how soon
The world before me, wide as heaven's great dome,
Would close around a single hearth and home.

VI.

That moon which made so bright
My castles in the air,
Has now the cold, sad gleam of some far light,
Toward which the traveler glances in the night,
And with a sigh, remembering that its ray
Shines not for him, turns wistfully away.

VII.

Once in Youth's boundless trust
I was assured of Fame,
And felt within me something which no rust
Of centuries, no Death could turn to dust ;
Now my Ambition, hopeless of the goal,
Is but a spur that frets the jaded soul.

VIII.

Old friends have fallen away—
They are not lost or changed ;
Our hearts grew shrunken with our youth's decay ;
I have no love to spare, and why should they ?
Our friendships are but memory, and entwine,
Leafless and brittle as a frozen vine.

IX.

Life has no buoyant rush,
No pause for reverie, now ;
In its departing zest and passing flush,
I feel the calm monotony, the hush,
With which our mother Nature, on her breast,
Lulls all her children to eternal rest !

SOUTH CAROLINA TO HER SONS. 1860.

 O arms, my children, up and do !
By Northern speakers shamed,
Your orators are weak and few,
Your courage is untamed.
Too long the brave Palmetto State
Has had its feelings wrung ;
Too long unanswered in debate,
Has Sumner "switched his tongue ?"
The land that brings forth one Calhoun,
Exhausts its crop of brains ;
But you have bowie-knives instead,
And gutta-percha canes,
If I have made your skulls too thick,
I've given you ready hands,
And there is virtue in a stick—
Your country understands.
The planter, ignorant as a lord,
The field-hand, dull and low,
All comprehend, with one accord,
The logic—of a blow.

Then grasp your gutta-percha clubs,
Approach with quiet tread,
Don't argue with the caitiff wretch,
But—knock him on the head !

A WOMAN'S LETTER.



HIS is a woman's letter, dearest !

Really it *is* crost—

Flowing words are in the queerest

Little ripples tost.

In the deluge how the merest

Specks of sense appear ;

How I cling unto the nearest

Straw of an idea !

Then the phrases, one by one,

Turn to sweet expression,

Landscapes rescued by the Sun,

From the mist's possession ;

And the very voice of Mary

Whispereth to me ;

Thoughts embodied in her airy

Style, spring from that sea.

Ye dull dwellers in the night,

Who scorn love—cold-hearted—

Know ye, love has a delight

Even for the parted !

Ye can never know the thrill,
Ere the seal is broken,
Doubting if the letter will
Joy or grief betoken.
Then the truest, gentlest maiden,
Holiest and best,
Tells me all with which is laden
Her confiding breast.
Some new joy each new revealing
Ever doth attend,
And with a sad, vacant feeling
Comes the sudden end,

TO A WOULD-BE ANCHORITE.



O—shun all places where

Man may be gentle without shame,

Shun woman in her sphere—she dare

Thy ruder spirit tame.

For man's heart softens with his bearing,

Touched by her voice and look,

Like the pure waters smoothly wearing

Pebbles in a brook.

And when past cares, still heaving on,

Throb in the aching breast

As waves roll when the winds are gone

And will not be at rest.

How sweetly woman's presence then

Comes like the moon at night,

Steals o'er the troubled souls of men,

And bids each care, that chafes again

Roll on in heavenly light.

Go—never mingling with thy kind,

In solitude apart—

But do not think to build a mind,
While ruining the heart.
No memories of a whispered word
From lips that blushed to speak,
Nor of a pressure from the hand
Most eloquently weak.
No reveries—no echoing tone
Of some sweet, sad farewell—
No faded tokens, never one,
Come in thy hermit cell.
Wake from that solitary dream,
Life has few sunny hours,
Soon hurried down its widening stream,
Thou can'st not reach its flowers.

DEATH AT SIXTEEN.



H ! I am young to die,
And fain would live through one more Sum-
mer's day,
But ere the twilight dims that cloudless sky,
I shall have passed away.

My father, where art thou?

Would I might hear thy voice and touch thy hand ;
The way grows dark, and very lonely now,
Into the unseen land.

Alas ! it may not be—

Far, far away, how little dost thou know
That the companion of thine age, that she,
Thy child, is stricken low.

Still, father, do not weep,

For I am wearied out with this keen pain,
And oh ! how gladly will I fall asleep
And be at rest again.

I go among the dead,
As thou hast seen me in my childhood, borne
Before the nightfall to my lonely bed,
To wake with thee at morn.

Beyond that noon-day sun,
And with the Almighty in his dwelling-place,
When the sad journey of thy life is done,
Thou shalt behold my face.

Ella ! my only friend,
While in our joyous girlhood, thou and I,
Vowed, each to each, a friendship without end,
We dreamed not friends could die.

Oh ! that my head might rest,
Where it has pillowed been so oft before,
Oh ! that upon thy pure and loving breast
I might recline once more.

Dearest, remember me
Not mournfully, not with a tear or sigh,
But when thou hearest some old melody
We loved in days gone by.

With many a lost bright thing,
With the sweet Summer wind's last fitful breath,
With the dead flowers, and the forgotten Spring,
I lay me down in death.

LOVE'S HERMITAGE.

1844.



HAVE made a dwelling for me
In the pleasant days to come,
When whatever roof is o'er me
Will my Mary call her home.
'Tis no Gothic cottage, Mary,
With its moulding quaint and rare ;
No palace of a fairy,
This castle in the air.
Wilt thou, in fancy only,
Yonder hill go climb—
There stands a farm-house lonely,
Of our country's olden time.
It can tell no witching story
Of our young land's days of yore—
But the tangled morning glory
Is twined around the door.
The branches of the ivy run

Its latticed porch behind,
Whose leaves turn glistening to the sun,
When ruffled by the wind.
The ancient poplars stand around,
Breathing a fitful sigh,
And a little brook, with its silver sound,
Chimes, evermore, hard by.
There, beneath that lowly
High-peaked, and moss-green roof,
Shall love's hermitage be wholly
From the weary world aloof.
There in Summer weather,
When the noontide hour is high,
We would sit and dream together,
Lulled by the poplars' sigh,
While the brooklet's water lapping
From stone to stone shall pour,
And the Summer breeze come flapping
To and fro the door.
There, when the daylight closes,
Sunk in a golden wave,
And the clouds fade—withering roses
Strewed on the sun's far grave ;
And the twilight steals along
O'er the embers in the West,

I would ask thee, love, with song,
To lull my soul to rest.
While the night dews are falling,
And all, but the wind, is still—
All but the hollow calling
Of the wakeful whip-poor-will.
When, Mary, thou and I are all
With our love, and the night, alone,
The very depths of thine heart will call
In music to mine own.

A RETROSPECT.

1844.



T is the day of rest.

I have few weary days—yet this of all
Brings me peculiar gladness—I can best
In its serene and holy time recall
Thoughts of you, Mary.

Now I can summon every recollection,
Each look and word that makes our love's brief story,
For, like the sunset, stoops this proud affection,
To touch the smallest thing with its own glory.

The morning wakes—
And with it memories of that glorious day,
When every tree's rough bark seemed hung with flakes
Of light—their leaves were emeralds, each spray
Let in the sapphire sky—that sky so bright,
In its autumnal blue, it seemed to burn
With an interior fire, and waves of light
To pour on earth from its exhaustless urn.

Our love was not one of those weakly flowers
That only open to the gentle night ;

It was not nursed by solitude—by hours
Of moonlight whispering—with footstep light

No breeze stole rustling by to fan its flame ;
Our's was the romance of pure love, the same
Forever—and its passionate confiding,
Years, with their changing seasons, cannot tame ;
It brooked that daylight, for it knew no hiding.

The twilight falls
Peopled with memories—each darker shade
It weaves about me, gathers and recalls
Visions too dear to me, too bright to fade.

I hear your voice again ; my cheek is fanned
By your warm breath ; I watch your changeful eye ;
I feel the clasp, the unclasping of your hand,
As your thoughts wander to, or pass me by.

Night quivers with its stars—
And think you, Mary, here our chain must break ?
All that has loveliness, all things of worth
And all things beautiful upon the earth
Some memories of you awake.

AN ARISTOCRAT'S REPLY TO THE
"SAY SO" OF THE PEOPLE.

ADDRESSED TO THE LEADERS OF ANTI-RENT.

1847.

E men, who make of ignorant man
An outcast and a savage ;
Who let the demon in him loose,
And laugh to see it ravage.
Ye who, to madden weaker souls,
Misuse your better reason,
And teach them towards their fellows, hate,
And towards their country treason
The crimes they've done, the blood they've shed,
Their want, their woe be on your head.
Where has God said, "Thou shalt not keep
"The thing that is thine own ;
"The sluggard and the sot shall reap
"That which they have not sown.

“Work, work, and hoard by day and night,

“Trade, travel, gather learning,

“It is the pauper's birthright, all

“The pauper's righteous earning.

“Be welcome to another's wealth

“But take by violence—not stealth.”

Rebuild the homesteads you have burned,

The barns you've fired by night,

Those ghastly spectacles, wherewith

You gave the people “light,”

But can you bid the downcast brow

Be lifted up again ;

Where, for the sweat of honest toil,

You've put the brand of Cain ?

And shall the hands, where blood has been,

Be stretched forth to their Maker clean ?

A SUNSET.

HE Summer shower had spent itself, but flashing
Along the twinkling corridors of trees,
Hung its last rain-drops, pattering and plashing,
As the green branches trembled to the breeze.

The clouds grew filmy till the sky was blue
Above us, but they kept a vapor zone,
That compassed the horizon, and still grew
And towered in darkness towards the setting sun.
But he swept calmly down—then seemed to falter
A moment, on the bank of vapor lying—
And kindled fire upon that giant altar,
Then sinking in the clouds, we see him dyeing
His prison-house, and purpling its sides ;
While lightning to and fro, like shuttles flying
Through that thin veil of woven glory, glides—
And the land swam with light—in gilded fretting
The tree-tops fluttered to the evening wind—

Their shadows stretching from the daylight setting,
Beckoned with dusky shades to arms behind.

Oh ! Mary, may our lives have such a setting—
Heaven's gates before us—sorrow's shades behind.

TO A JEWISH MAIDEN.



THOUGHT to myself, fair Jewess,
As we sat in the forest shade,
While there rose forever to us,
A murmur from the glade,
Which breathed on woodland nook and dell,
The hollow voice of an empty shell,
And told where unseen waters fell.
I thought to myself, fair Jewess,
As anon a stealthy sound,
That seemed still to pursue us
Thro' the green leaves, whispered round,
Mid the echo of falling water,
And the mountain breeze above,
I thought—can the Hebrew's daughter
Feel for a Gentile—love?
The blood, that with violet shading,
Shines through thy temple fair,
When the wind lifts up the braiding
Of thy black and glossy hair—

That dimly fills the veins which creep
Through this delicate wrist, and stand
In blue relief, when too long, I keep
Within my own, this hand
Is the blood of that Oriental race
On whom a seal divine
Is branded, with the swarthy trace
Of their old Egyptian dwelling-place ;
And the sun of Palestine.
Thy nostril has the haughty curl
Of centuries of pride,
When ye were the chosen people, girl,
Of all the earth beside.
That smiling lip while at rest has still
A half voluptuous sneer,
(Which Judith yielding to the will
Of the doomed King might wear)—
And though thine eye may seem to fill,
And sadden with a tear,
It is but an overflowing light,
A wavering liquid beam—
Like the quiver of stars, on a breezy night,
Beneath a ruffled stream.
Such as thou in Heathen choir,
With Pagan orgies flushed,

While a girdle broad of living fire,
Round Sinai hissing rushed—
Such as thou, with dishevelled hair,
Wild song and ringing laugh,
As o'er white arm and bosom bare,
Shot glimmering the blue lightning's glare,
Danced round the golden calf;—
While God's own angel in the shroud,
Of the still gathering thunder cloud,
From Sinai's top looked down,
And the rooted mountain shook and bowed,
Beneath his awful frown.
Such as thou, o'er the desert sand,
With thy fathers, journeyed, maiden,
A life-time on towards the promised land
Still weary—heavy laden—
Still pressing with unquenched desire,
By the desolate rough way—
Where flamed by night, the unkindled fire,
Where moved the cloud by day.
And ye follow now, with all your might,
As ye followed that cloud of old;
Mid the darkness of your nation's blight,
Ye hunt the phantom gold.
Ye hunt and find—yet none the less,

In your secret heart of pride—
Would ye have the world a wilderness,
In haughty freedom and distress—
O'er its desert paths to stride
Once more, to hear Jehovah own,
That ye are his, and ye, alone.

And I thought as a chasm deep,
Fair girl, that I could see
Down towards earth's centre, seemed to creep—
Dividing thee, and me.
Mid the echo of falling water,
And the mountain breeze above,
I thought—for the Hebrew's daughter,
Can the Gentile dream of Love?

THE CHAMELEON.



H ! Woman, many a thousand years
We have strewn thy path with flowers ;
Have spared it sorrow, toil and tears,
And kept the thorns for our's.

We have ever watched thee, that no hurt
Might come to a thing so fair ;
That thou mightest be beautiful still, as thou wert,
When given to our care.

And thy voice seemed to cheer in the weary race
Of life, that must needs be run ;
Sweet as the babble of the brook,
To the reaper in the sun.

And for thee within our hearts were borne
Thoughts noble, pure and high—
For the light of Eden's latest morn

Seemed lingering in thine eye,
And we could still a shadow trace
Of our lost glory in thy face.

As we have knelt so long—we kneel
Before thy loveliness,
And humbly ask of thee to feel
Compassion for distress.
We love—and wish our love returned—
We kneel to say so—and are spurned.

Oh! then, what very different views
Of woman we all take ;
We find no trace of Paradise—
Except, perhaps—the snake.

OUR PUSSY.

E have a nice pussy, her first name is "Grid,"
Her teeth and her claws are most carefully
hid ;
She keeps her mouth close, and she shuts up
her paw,
She is the best kitten that ever you saw.

Her eyes are of amber, just mottled with green,
With the longest of little brown noses between
And her coat is as soft as a jacket of down,
Its color is streaked, partly gray, partly brown.

And her manners are sweet, though she does "make
believe,"
For a cat who is true to herself must deceive ;
And she seems with her brother's caresses content,
Though she thinks in her heart, they are not worth a
cent.

One sight of a mouse, she would greatly prefer
To all of the family, stroking her fur ;
And she kisses her dear mother's hand with delight—
Then, suddenly vanishes out of our sight.

She looks at us fondly, with both her large eyes,
Whose pupils incessantly vary in size ;
Although if we knew it, she wishes to know
How soon she can possibly manage to go.

She is a nice pussy ; like many a friend,
Who finds us a bore, but is forced to pretend,
And pays us a visit, but thinks, with a sigh,
How long he must stay before bidding "good-bye."

A POEM FOR FRINKET.



HERE'S a little Lovey missing
Who is gone from every where—
No tramp of little footsteps,
No laughter in the air.

No singing in the entry,
No whistle at the door ;
Oh ! I wish I had that Lovey
Just where he was before—
For he sometimes was a pester,
But he never was a bore.

He sometimes did whatever
His little hands saw fit,
But he did not care for scolding,
Which he did not mind a bit.

And when we called him "Donty,"
He only sweetly smiled—

For he had a lovely temper,
That darling little child.

He is the nicest Frinkie,
That ever yet was born ;
And no wonder when he's missing
His father feels forlorn.

He must watch his "poor sick" mother,
In her travels all around,
And bring her home by railroad,
Entirely safe and sound.

A LOVER'S DREAM.



LONG hours I could not sleep—

It was more rest to me,

To be left alone in those silent hours,

With only thoughts of thee.

Sleep stole those thoughts away—

I had watched too long and was unwary ;

But I dreamed that I was—thought more bright
than they

Beside you again as of old, dear Mary.

The midnight hours were drawing nigh,

The moon, with its cold finger,

Beckoned me, and on the wall

Wrote that I must not linger.

Then in my dream I ask you

For “some gift whose presence may

Tell me of the giver's love
When himself is far away."

Your smile was one of those
That in the memory ever live,
As you said, "I have given you myself,
And have I more to give?"

I woke—and it was no dream,
And it gladdened me—for I knew
That even, Mary, when I slept,
My heart was awake to you—*
And my memory dim to all beside,
Unto your image true.

* I was asleep—but my heart waked."—SONG OF SOLOMON.

PIO NONO.

1848.

HE people's faith, like ivy, clings alone
Around the crumbling old Pontificate,
And masks the ruin, holding stone to stone,
And making beautiful the baleful weight
That faith may be most Catholic and pure.

The Pope may be a demi-god, or beast
Of many horns—I know there's one thing sure,
Woe to the land whose ruler is her priest ;
For to no mortal upon earth, 'tis given
To forge a sceptre from the King of Heaven.

'Tis past—and nought, save here and there, a lonely
Crest-fallen exile, tells the tale forlorn—
The light we took for Freedom's torch, was only
An ignis fatuus, of stagnation born.
The saint who drove from Ireland to the flood,
All reptiles of the meadow, bog and hovel,

Forgot, and left behind, the thirst for blood,
Of reptiles, and propensity to grovel.
Nay—there are creatures we from Ireland learn,
So vile, that trodden on, they will not turn.

THE MYSTERIOUS SEAL.

ARY, you will call me stupid,
But, this Heathen, is it Cupid
That seems all the while to trip so ;
Is it Cupid or Calypso
Prest upon your letter's seal ?
I am at a loss to deal
With an emblem which so odd is—
Is it ancient god or goddess,
Portrait of a modern fairy,
Or some mortal Heathen, Mary ?
And it's waving in its hand
What ?—a duster or a wand ;
Tis an amazon upholding
Something—let us say a mace,
Or a German housewife, scolding,
Put a broomstick in its place.
I should proudly little care,
Little ask about its meaning,

But the figure has an air
Of conceit so overweening,
In its attitude and face—
Such a consciousness of grace !
Is the thing a Heathen, Mary,
Cupid, Amazon or fairy ?

TO MARY.



H ! friend—beloved—in very truth
Seems it not meet that thou,
Ever the angel of my youth,
Should guide my manhood now.

Never a word of chiding,
Never a thought unkind
Was in thy gentle guiding,
Was in thy gentle mind.

Their jewels the Hebrews olden,
Brought to their idols' shrine,
So, I, every thought I deemed golden,
Hastened to bring to mine.

And her eye when I brought it would glisten,
And a flush on her cheek would rise,
Till she seemed to me to listen

With her changing cheek and eyes ;
And I saw the echo of my thought,
To a shape of wondrous beauty wrought.

Now, love has woven us a band
From the ties with which friendship bound us ;
And our trust in each other long kindled, has fanned,
Till its flame shines serenely around us ;
And our rest is like childhood's—hand in hand—
With the angels' arms around us.

MUSINGS OF A BENEDICT.

T must feel odd when stealing
Upon one, comes time in its power,
But it is the strangest feeling
For a man to grow old in an hour.
In the space of a single moment's span,
To become, at a breath, a married man—
For the fate of the aloe seems dooming
You bachelors old and gay ;
You are fifty years in blooming,
To die in a single day ;
Nay, ye are plucked ere ye bloom at all,
To wilt in the bud under woman's thrall.
No more in the evening, debating,
You forget with a friend the time ;
No—you hear a portentous grating
That creaks in the midnight chime ;
The sound of a bolt, which you have no doubt
In a very few moments will lock you out.

When the heart of a friend is swelling
O'er its brim, with some confidence deep,
O ! bid him beware of telling
The secret you dare not keep.
If he *has* confided, assure him then
You are married, he will not confide again.
Still, bachelors, do not tarry
Till the morn of life is spent ;
If you take so much time to marry,
Ye will have none to repent.
If life when but single, is so little trouble,
So pleasant a thing too—what must it be double ?

TO THE SPRING WIND.

IND of returning Spring
Go—breathe upon Mary's cheek ;
Go—look on the roses there opening,
If roses thou dost seek.

Carry the scent of flowers
On thy wings unto her ;
Strew round her footsteps, sunny hours—
Thrilling health waft to her !

Stir gently in her hair !
Lay thy cool finger on her brow !
Whisper, “peace,” for sad thoughts there
May be aching now.

Oh ! be her lover for me, gentle air ;
With joy in thy wings pursue her !
With the moonlight she loves, and skies most fair,
Unto thy kisses woo her !

For her love came to me first, in gloomy hours,
As thou comest to Earth—with gladness rife—
And that love to me, now, like thy breath to the flowers
Thou hast taught to grow, is the breath of my life.

THE SONG OF SONGS.



SAT lonely—little heeding
How the moments hastened by—
And the page that I was reading,
Grew a mist before mine eye.

'Twas a book you gave me, Mary,
It lay open at the page
Where the Song of Songs is written,
By King Solomon the sage.

And the words, both wild and simple,
Breathing more true love than art,
Of the builder of the temple,
Were still echoing in my heart.

He, the conqueror, the wise,
Learned in all earthly lore,
Finds a world in woman's eyes
That he never dreamed before

He, so versed in every flower,
Led by some Judean maid,
Finds unfolded, in an hour,
A new violet in the shade.

The flower of woman's love that never
Blooms but in the deepest shade,
That, expanding once forever,
May be crushed, but will not fade.

What avails his wealth of learning—
How, bewildered with the passion,
Humbly he breathes out the yearning
Of his heart in lover's fashion.

Think you—had the royal poet
Angel's help in his narration?
Trust me—to be loved and know it
That was all his inspiration.

Once I envied him—not power
Nor his wealth of earthly lore—
But the finding of this flower;
Now, I envy him no more.

THE CURL.

OU gave me, Mary, a shining curl,
And it has faded in my keeping—
But the memory of the gentle girl
Who gave it, undimmed in my heart is
sleeping.

I love that ringlet ; it seems to bring
Her whom I love so near ;
'Twas a part of her beauty once—a thing
As Mary's self, most dear.
And the moonlight in her revery,
Has gleamed along that hair,
When her head and fancy were as free
As the breath of the midnight air.
Now I can place that same ringlet at night,
Where the moon on its folds will shine,
And dream away hours by its still light
O'er the token that you are mine.

Yet ever the gloss on the cherished tress,
With the shadow of Time's wing, grows less and less,
While the perfume of the violet,
The perfume you love, floats round it yet—
So your beauty must die, but the years that roll
O'er the flower of youth, spare its perfume—the scul.

